

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system in real time without the users intervention, wherein the system comprises at least one service device (108) operable to provide services to said user (109), at least one access device (105a) operable to provide access to said distributed communication system, wherein said system also comprises:

at least one control means (101; 103) is connected to said at least one access device (105a) and to said at least one service device (108) via the Internet, wherein said at least one access device (105a) is connected to an identification device (113) operable to identify an address of a specific user;

at least one storage device (102; 104) connected to said at least one control means (101; 103), wherein said at least one control means (101; 103) is connected to a cache means (111) operable to store mappings of said addresses and identifications of said users (109), wherein said service device (108) sends a request for information about a the user requesting a service from said service device (108) to said control means (101; 103), such that the control means (101; 103) checks if said cache means contains an up to date identification; whereby

if said check gives an affirmative answer, said control means (101; 103) fetches said information from said storage device (102; 104) and sends a reply comprising said information to said service device (108); and

if said check gives a negative answer, said control means (101; 103) sends a request for a real time identification of said address to said, access device (105a), wherein said access device (105a) identifies said address with the aid of said identification device (113) and sends said identification to said control means (101; 103)-such that said control means (101; 103) fetches said information from said storage device (102; 104) and sends a reply comprising said information to said service device (108) that identifies the user[.], wherein said information about

the user is obtained without explicit intervention from the user or from stored data on the user's computer.

2. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to Claim 1, wherein said system is divided into a number of geographical regions based on the distance between different geographical regions.

3. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to Claim 2, wherein said distance is measured by the delay between individual control means (101; 103) in said system.

4. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 2, wherein each geographical region comprises a central control means (101), a central storage device (102), and in that each geographical region can comprise at least one regional control means (103), at least one regional storage device (104), and at least one access device (105a).

5. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 2, wherein each geographical region also can comprise a supplier means (106a) operable to distribute information, and at least one attach means (107a) operable to attach additional information to identifications, wherein said supplier means (106a) is connected to said at least one access device (105a) and to said at least one attach means (107a).

6. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 1, wherein each

service device (108) is connected to a first interface unit (110), which in turn is connected to said-at least one control means (101; 103), in that each control means (101; 103) is connected to a second interface unit (112), which in turn is connected to said at least one access device (105a), and in that each control means (101; 103) also is connected to said at least one storage device (102; 104).

7. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 1, wherein said distributed communication system is the Internet.

8. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 1, wherein each service device (108) is an online service provider (108), each access device (105a) is an Internet access provider (105a), and each control means (101; 103) is a server (101; 103).

9. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 1, wherein each supplier means (106a) is a first supplier server (106a), and each attach means (107a) is a second supplier server (107a).

10. (Previously presented) A system operable to identify and access information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 1, wherein said address of a user (109) is an IP-address.

11. (Currently amended) A method for identifying and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system in real time without the users intervention, is wherein said method is performed with the aid of a system comprising at least one service device (108) operable to provide services to said user (109), and at least one

access device (105a) operable to provide access to said distributed communication system, said method comprises the steps of:

- requesting a service by a user (109) from a service device (108);
- sending a request by said service device (108) for additional information about said user (109) to a control means (101; 103);
- checking, by said control means (101, 103), if a cache means (111) connected to said control means (101; 103) contains an up to date identification; whereby
 - if said check gives an affirmative answer, said control means (101; 103) fetches said information from ~~a to~~ said control means (101; 103) connected to a storage device (102; 104) and sends a reply comprising said information to said service device (108); or
 - if said check gives a negative answer, said control means (101, 103) sends a request for a real time identification of an address of said user (109) to said access device (105a);
- identifying said address, by said access device (105a) with the aid of a connected identification device (113), wherein said access device sends said identification to said control means (101; 103) via the Internet; and
- fetching said information from said storage device (102; 104), and sending a reply comprising said information to said service device (108)[.], wherein said information about the user is obtained without explicit intervention from the user or from stored data on the user's computer.

12. (Previously presented) A method for identifying and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to Claim 11, wherein said system also comprises a to said each service device (108) connected, first interface unit (110), and a to said each control means (101; 103) connected, second interface unit (112), wherein the method also comprises the following steps:

- forwarding said request sent from said service device (108) by said first interface unit (110), such that the first interface unit (110) decides which control means (101; 103) to send said request to; and
- forwarding said request sent from said control means (101; 103) for a real time identification of an address of said user (109) by said second interface unit (112) which selects the access device (105a) to send said request to.

13. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 11, wherein said system is divided into a number of geographical regions based on the distance between different geographical regions.

14. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to Claim 13, wherein said distance is measured by the delay between individual control means (101;103) in said system.

15. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 13, wherein each geographical region comprises a central control means (101), a central storage device (102), and in that each geographical region can comprise at least one regional control means (103), at least one regional storage device (104), at least one access device (105a), a supplier means (106a) operable to distribute information, and at least one attach means (107a) operable to attach additional information to identifications, wherein said supplier means (106a) is connected to said at least one access device (105a) and to said at least one attach means (107a).

16. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 11, wherein said method also comprises the following steps:

- updating by said control means (101; 103) said cache means (111) with a mapping between said address and an identification for each said request forwarded by said first interface unit (110);
- receiving by said control means (101; 103) a mapping between said address and said identification by querying said access device (105a), or directly from another control means (101; 103);
- storing by said control means (101; 103) said mapping together with a time stamp in an internal cache means (111); and
- iterating by said control means (101; 103) through the currently stored mappings between said address and said identification in said cache means (111) if a predetermined time has elapsed since the stored time stamp for said entry; whereby
 - if said address is invalid, which is verified by querying said access device 105a, said entry in said internal cache means (111) is removed; or
 - if said address is valid, which is verified by querying said access device 105a, said entry is updated with a new time stamp.

17. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein said method also comprises the following steps:

- downloading by said central control means (101), within a first geographical region, mappings between access account information and an identifier from said access device (105a), which mapping data is stored in said central storage device (102) within said first geographical region;

- downloading by said supplier means (106a) within said first geographical region mappings between access account information and an identifier from said access device (105a) within said first geographical region;
- distributing by said supplier means (106a) within said first geographical region said information and identifier to said attach means (107a) in said first region, which attach means (107a) attach additional information to said identifier;
- sending, by said attach means (107a) in said first region, the new total information and identifier to said central control means (101) within said first region; and
- storing said new total information and identifier in said central storage device (102) in said first region.

18. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 17, wherein said method also comprises the steps of:

- distributing, by said central control means (101), said mapping data to said regional control means (103); and
- storing said mapping data in said regional storage device (104).

19. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein said method also comprises the steps of:

- distributing, by said central control means (101) in said first region, said mapping data to central control means (101) in another geographical region if there are service devices (108) requesting said information from said regional control means (103) or said central control means (101) in another region than said first region; and
- storing said mappings data in said central storage device (102) in said another region.

20. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein said method also comprises the step of:

- distributing, by said central control means (101) in said first region, said mapping data to regional control means (103) in other geographical regions if there are service devices (108) in another region than said first region requesting said information from said regional control means (103).

21. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein said method also comprises the step of:

- providing a possibility for said user (109) to interact with said control means (101; 103).

22. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to Claim 12, wherein said interaction is comprised of said user (109) is giving feedback to an action taken by said service device (108), wherein said feedback is stored in said storage device (102; 104).

23. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 11, wherein said distributed communication system is the Internet.

24. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 11, wherein each service device (108) is an online service provider (108), each access device (105a) is an Internet access provider (105a), and each control means (101; 103) is a server (101; 103).

25. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein each supplier means (106a) is a first supplier server (106a), and each attach means (107a) is a second supplier server (107a).

26. (Previously presented) A method for identification and accessing information about a user (109) of a distributed communication system according to claim 15, wherein said address of a user (109) is an IP-address.

27. (Original) At least one computer program product (102₁, ..., 102_n) directly loadable into the internal memory of at least one digital computer (100₁, ..., 100_n), comprising software code portions for performing the steps of claim 11 when said at least one product (102₁, ..., 102_n) is/are run on said at least one computer (102₁, ... , 100_n).

28. (Currently amended) A method of identifying and obtaining information about a computer user that accesses a website or a service on the Internet in a manner that requires no [interaction] intervention from the user in the form of stored data on the user's computer or log-in procedures, the method comprising the steps of:

requesting a website or a service from the Internet by the computer user;

sending a request for identifying information on the user to a third party entity via the Internet if the website initially cannot determine the user's identity;

retrieving the user's identifying information from a stored database accessible by the third party entity if the identifying information sought is included and updated in the database;

retrieving the user's identifying information, by the third party entity, from an Internet access provider associated with the user's present session if the identifying information sought is not included in the database or is [outdated] not updated[; and], in which case the access provider associated with the user's present session provides the

current identifying information of the user which is used to update the information in the database that is accessible by the third party entity;

- sending the identifying information from the third party entity to the website[.],
• such that the information about the user is obtained without explicit intervention from the user or from stored data on the user's computer.

29. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein the computer user, website, and third party entity may be located in different geographical regions.

30. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein the third party entity checks a cache means for updated information on the user prior to the step of retrieving the user's identifying information from the stored database.
